

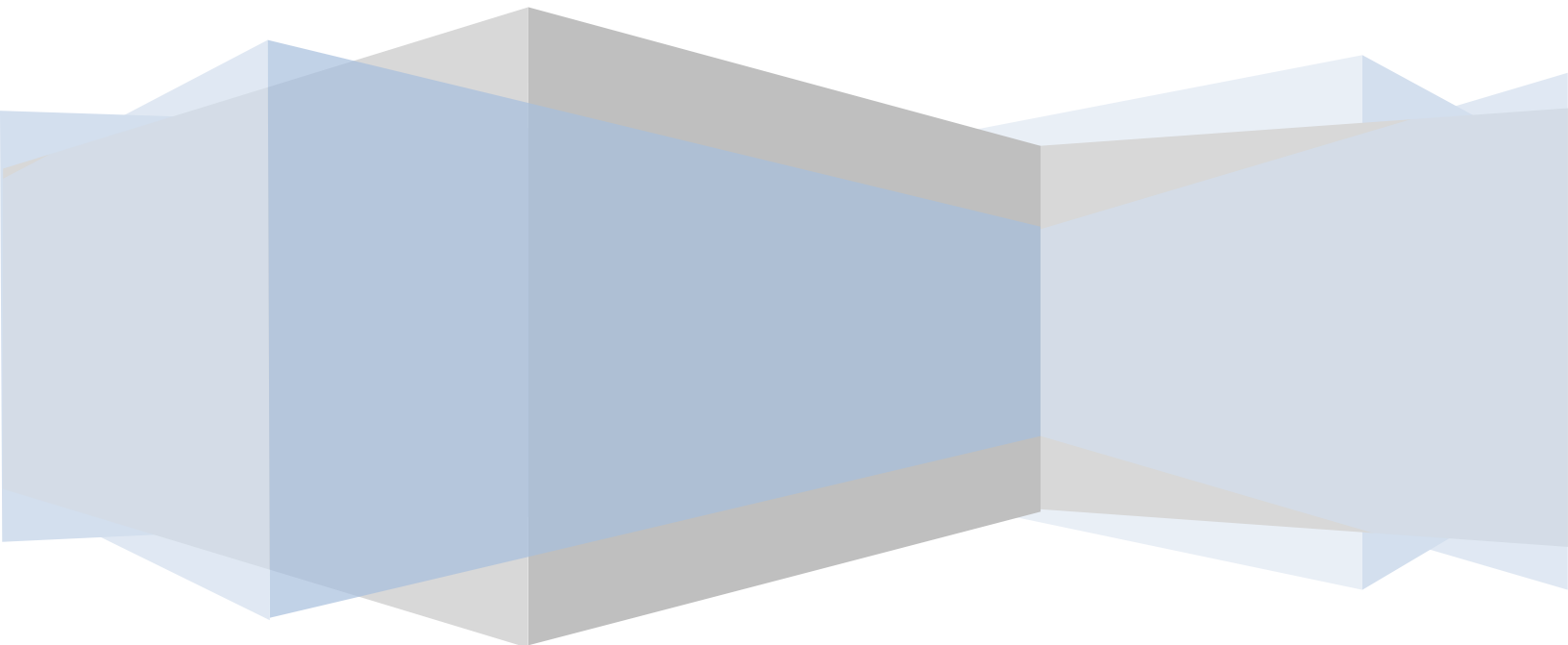
Written by Aji Issac when he was heading DA web warkting team

“Ranking is dead – Are you still judging your SEO company by ranking?”

Be web business educated

[Weekly Educative series – XVIII]

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Few years back SEO companies were judged on the basis of ranking. Still 80% of the SEO companies are focusing only on rankings and paid as per ranking performance. At Pubcon, Bruce Clay brought this strong statement “Ranking is dead”, where he emphasized on how one shouldn’t focus only on ranking. We have been discussing about the new age ranking for last 3 years. New age ranking is (will be) multi rankings based on multi parameters:

Fully localized (Based on the location you want to search).

Already Google is good at this. Let’s search for banks in:

- Google.com (with no location mentioned)
<http://www.google.com/search?hl=en&q=bank&btnG=Google+Search&aq=f&oq=>
- From Google.co.in
<http://www.google.co.in/search?hl=en&q=bank&btnG=Google+Search&aq=f&oq=>
- From Google.co.uk
<http://www.google.co.uk/search?hl=en&q=bank&btnG=Google+Search&aq=f&oq=>
- From Google.com (with location specified as US using Gl=us)
<http://www.google.com/search?hl=en&q=bank&btnG=Google+Search&aq=f&oq&gl=us>
- From Google.com (with other locations):
 - gl = Country code (example gl=us
http://code.google.com/apis/adwords/docs/developer/adwords_api_countries.html)
 - gll = Lat & Long
 - gr = Worldwide region code
(http://code.google.com/apis/adwords/docs/developer/adwords_api_regions.html)
 - gcs = City (but gr must be set to the same value.
http://code.google.com/apis/adwords/docs/developer/adwords_api_us_cities.html)
 - gpc = Zip code (
 - gm = Metropolitan areas of US
(http://code.google.com/apis/adwords/docs/developer/adwords_api_us_metros.html)

You will be able to see different results (and more importantly, different ads). It is very difficult to dominate top ranks from all the locations. Now the strategy is to identify the target regions and rank for the regions (instead of targeting the whole region).



Behavioral ranking

It may show up in ranking if you are logged into your Google account or have a cookie with some good information stored in the cookie. Based on your search behavior, search engines will differ in ranking. I remember the Yahoo tool which used to allow the settings from shopping to information. When you search for “Car” in Google, Google will try to understand whether you are looking to buy a new car or just finding some information about various car models. Your previous searches will define the ranking pages for next searches.

<http://www.google.com/history/> is just a small example of how much data Google has about your search pattern.

Time based ranking

Based on the selected time, different websites may rank better. **Example:**

http://www.google.com/search?hl=en&as_q=bank&as_epq=&as_oq=&as_eq=&num=10&lr=&as_filetype=&ft=i&as_sitesearch=&as_qdr=m&as_rights=&as_occt=any&cr=&as_nlo=&as_nhi=&as_afe=images

More than website on search results:

Now the search result pages are getting:

- Videos
- Blog posts
- Latest news
- Images
- Shopping items
- Other relevant items.

We call it universal search, where a search brings results for all modes. This is becoming more and more prominent in search engines.

Impossible to say my website is ranking

Now it is almost impossible to say that, “my website is ranking #1 for XYZ keywords”, now a better sentence will be that, “my website is ranking #1 for XYZ keywords, when searched from ABC location under following parameters”.



How should one do web marketing now?

These are the following things one should use to redefine web marketing:

1. First step towards the current web marketing trend is to focus beyond search engines. Web marketing is more than search engines. In fact, now the web is much more than search engines.
2. Fixing up the right parameters of success measurement, which should ideally include:
 - a. Traffic (from any source)
 - b. Total number of traffic source (anything that contributes more than 5% of traffic. This will help in diversifying the risk)
 - c. Relevancy of traffic (Bounce rate, stick-ability)
 - d. Conversion/Sales
 - e. Cost per conversion (for different traffic sources)
 - f. Community building (how many people joined community, participation count etc)
3. **Focusing on affiliate system based on CPAs:**

I was in New Delhi (Capital of India) for the last 4 days. I just overheard how one competitor is snatching employees from another company by offering a much higher salary package. In this war between competitors, the employees enjoy a better share of profit. Even with the change in Google's algorithm, profit will be shared among many more websites now. An affiliate system that works on a CPA basis allows web business to go search engine independent.
4. **Focusing on various products:** It is the right time to create better videos, viral images, blog posts, news items etc to tap additional mode of communication.

